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Gary Powers Decorated by CIA, Told Not to Wear, Discuss Medal

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Special Dispatch

WASHINGTON, May 5—In a secret ceremony, the Central Intelligence Agency last month awarded a medal to Francis Gary Powers, the U-2 pilot who crashed on May 1, 1960, deep inside the Soviet Union.

A United States-Soviet summit meeting, in Paris collapsed in the uproar over the U-2 flight. The affair chilled East-West relations and ended any meaningful contact between President Dwight D. Eisenhower and Soviet Premier Nikita S. Khrushchev.

Powers, officially a test pilot in Burbank, Calif., for the Lockheed Aircraft Corp., manufacturer of the U-2, received the CIA medal in a ceremony about two weeks ago at the intelligence agency's headquarters in Langley, Va.

Like the ceremony, the medal is secret. Powers is not supposed to tell anyone about it or wear it.

The CIA is not talking about it. When the New York Herald Tribune asked a spokesman for the agency to confirm the award, he replied: "No comment at all. He's a former employee. We don't comment on former employees."

There were at least two mysteries surrounding the medal: why the CIA wanted to bestow an award on Powers and why it waited five years to do so. Last Saturday was the fifth anniversary of the U-2 flight.

Powers was exchanged for Soviet spy Rudolf Ivanovich Abel on Feb. 10, 1962. The exchange, arranged by New York attorney James B. Donovan, took place in Berlin.

After the return of Powers to this country in 1962, the CIA hid him for 24 days, subjecting him to exhaustive interrogation. The board of inquiry set up by CIA wanted to know why Powers had not used the "destruct" switches in the U-2 that would have set off a powerful explosive charge to destroy the plane and its equipment.

In testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee, after he passed the board of inquiry, Powers said he had tried to reach the switches, but could not because of gravity forces. He parachuted to earth, he testified.

Powers was officially cleared by the board of inquiry and a CIA report issued the day he testified before the Senate. It said that he had lived up to "his obligations as an American under the circumstances in



Associated Press Wirephoto
Francis Gary Powers

which he found himself." It said he would get his back pay.

On Nov. 3, 1962, the CIA announced that Powers had taken "a routine test pilot job" with Lockheed at Burbank, and had left the intelligence agency because "his work was finished."

Russian Admits That Col. Abel Was Spying As U.S. Charged

MOSCOW, May 5 (AP)—A Soviet security forces general admitted last night for the first time that Col. Rudolf Ivanovich Abel was engaged in espionage for the Soviet Union when he was arrested in New York in 1957.

Abel, sentenced to 30 years in prison in Nov. 1957, was freed Feb. 10, 1962, in exchange for U-2 pilot Francis Gary Powers.

The security forces general singled out Abel as an outstanding Soviet intelligence agent in a television talk about Soviet espionage work in World War II. The general's name was indistinctly mentioned. Moscow television officials later said they could not give his name.

The general said Abel joined the intelligence service in 1927 when he was a Young Communist League member. He said Abel had been a Communist party member since 1931.

The officer said that when Abel was arrested, U.S. intelligence agents "offered him a choice of joining their service or standing a trial that could have a fatal end."

He said Abel turned down the offer.

The general charged that "many means of pressure" were used on Abel to make him confess to espionage. But during his imprisonment, he read and painted and conducted himself like a genuine Socialist man."

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